

Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, February 14, 2008

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-11
Foster Care	12
Fatherhood	13-15
Domestic Violence	16-17
Homelessness	18-19
Energy Assistance	20
Unemployment	21-22

*Important story at this spot

 [Click here to return to the Kansan](#)

Child found unharmed in Hazel Park

Five-year-old girl wanders away from Warren residence

By John Michalak
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

HAZEL PARK -- A 5-year-old Warren girl reported as lost apparently took an adventurous one-mile walk into Hazel Park on Monday and was returned to her mother unharmed.

The girl's wandering included crossing Dequindre Road during rush hour traffic in freezing temperatures.

The girl was gone for four hours before her mother called Warren Police to report her missing, Hazel Park police said.

The girl's mother, Amy Marie Foresi, 33, said her daughter wasn't injured or harmed.

"She is fine," said Foresi on Wednesday. "She thinks it's OK to walk around. I have explained to her that you can't do that. It was freezing out, but she claims she wasn't cold."

Foresi is a single mom who was working cleaning houses at the time her daughter wandered off.

Normally her daughter and a 2-year-old sibling attend day care, Foresi said. But the daughter said she wanted to stay home Monday and play with her friends, Foresi added.

Foresi's 31-year-old brother was taking care of the daughter and sibling at the mom's residence on Capitol in Warren. The daughter went to a friend's house nearby while the brother cared for the younger child, Foresi said. The daughter apparently left the friend's house and walked away.

"It was pretty stressful," the mom said. "I'm not trusting anyone anymore to take care of my kids."

It took a lot of effort by several caring people to reunite the girl with her mother, who eventually picked up her daughter shortly before 7 p.m. at the Hazel Park police station.

It started with Crystal Carrie Booth, 24, of Canton, who was inside an AT&T outlet at 1055 E. Nine Mile, Hazel Park, and spotted the girl outside alone shortly before 5 p.m.

After waiting a few minutes, Booth approached the girl and determined she was lost and alone. Booth called Hazel Park police.

The girl told officers her name and age, adding she was in kindergarten and missed her bus ride home, police reports said.

Officers added the girl was dressed in a coat, scarf, pajamas and boots. They contacted a Hazel Park school official who checked the district's pupil database, but didn't have any record of the girl.

The school official, Shirley Ann Atcho, apparently had a hunch and called a female friend in Warren who checked that district's database shortly after 7 p.m. and determined the lost girl attended Westview Elementary School, which was on mid-winter break, police said.

Officers obtained emergency information about the girl and unsuccessfully attempted to contact her family.

At 7:40 p.m., the girl's mother called Warren Police and was advised Hazel Park police had her daughter, police said.

The uncle said the girl went to a friend's residence at 3:30 p.m., but left because her friend couldn't play with her. The girl apparently wandered off, police reports said.

Investigators contacted officials with the Michigan Department of Human Services in Oakland County who advised police to release the girl to her mother.

Hazel Park Police Chief David Niedermeier said it appears the case belongs to Warren Police.

"It sounds like employees from the schools used some networking that benefited us and the child," Niedermeier said. "When you deal with the most vulnerable in society, whether they are young or elderly, you put forth an extra effort. Often those people can't fend for themselves. We happened to be in position to reunite the girl with her family and protect that child."

Niedermeier said there's a lesson to be learned from the incident.

"You have to make sure the people you leave your children with are up to the task," he said. "Children are the most precious thing you have and parents must protect them."

Contact John Michalak at john.michalak@dailytribune.com or (248) 591-2521.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.dailytribune.com/stories/021408/loc_n2001.shtml

DETROIT FREE PRESS

WAYNE COUNTY NEWS BRIEFS

CANTON: Man in abuse case headed to court

February 14, 2008

A man accused of plunging his girlfriend's 3-year-old daughter into a bathtub filled with scalding water and severely burning her will have his preliminary examination in 35th District Court in Plymouth on Friday.

Willis Jacob Adams, 25, of Canton, has been charged with first-degree child abuse, second-degree child abuse and being a habitual offender.

The alleged offense took place in January.



Thursday, February 14, 2008

Monroe

Girl calls 911; dad charged with DUI

Steve Pardo / The Detroit News

MONROE -- A Hamtramck father faces a charge of operating a vehicle while intoxicated and child endangerment after his 13-year-old daughter -- annoyed because he said they were taking a road trip to Florida -- called 911 to report he was driving drunk.

She wasn't bluffing, cops allege. Officers say the man had an open 40-ounce bottle of beer and a blood-alcohol content of .223 -- nearly three times the legal limit -- when he was pulled over Monday about 13 miles from the Ohio border on Interstate 75. Police haven't determined if he was winding his way to the Sunshine State.

"Dispatch initially said her father kidnapped her and was intoxicated," said Monroe Police Lt. Charlie Abel. "Apparently she was angry he was taking her to Florida, and she didn't want to go."

The girl called from the backseat of the van, and officers stopped Pawel Bozek, 39, of Hamtramck, who first tried to pull over on the left side of the freeway, then almost hit a guardrail when his van skidded on snow, Abel said. Bozek was arraigned Tuesday and faces a Feb. 25 preliminary examination in 1st District Court in Monroe. The charges could land him in jail for one year.

"Who is the more adult person in that van?" asked Richard Rondeau, executive director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving of Southeast Michigan. "She was very brave for doing something like this. I applaud her."

Bozek is a Polish immigrant who could face immigration issues. He holds a permanent residence card, commonly known as a green card. It is possible, but unlikely, he could be deported, said Detroit defense attorney Paul Swanson. "As a practical matter, any lawyer could probably get (the charges) reduced," Swanson said. "I don't think it's a deportable offense by the time it's resolved. It's certainly trouble for the guy."

Bozek doesn't have legal custody of the girl, who is staying with other family members, police said.

You can reach Steve Pardo at (734) 462-2191 or spardo@detnews.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080214/METRO/802140357>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2008 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.

The Saline Reporter

Police arrest man for sexually explicit text messages

Suspect traveled from Grand Blanc to meet Saline teenager

By Brian Cox
, Staff Writer

A Grand Blanc man was arrested in the Saline High School parking lot Friday night after he tried to arrange a meeting with a 15-year-old Saline boy he met on the Internet.

Police say Michael Bishop Huston, 44, sent the teen sexually explicit text messages before trying to meet him in person.

Huston and the boy met on [Myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com), according to police reports, and had been in communication for about three months.

Huston told the boy he was 23, according to police.

The electronic exchanges between the two began in a "general friendly way," according to reports, before Huston and the boy shared some personal information and telephone numbers.

Huston's text messages eventually became sexual in nature, police said.

School officials contacted police after the boy became frightened and told a counselor about the text messages.

"The kid and his parents helped a lot with the investigation," Saline Police Chief Paul Bunten said.

Authorities learned Huston sent the boy a text message on Friday saying he was in Saline and wanted to meet.

In response, Saline Police, in conjunction with Pittsfield Township police, located Huston at the high school, where he was arrested.

Charged on Sunday with soliciting a minor for immoral purposes, a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison, Huston was placed on \$100,000 bond pending a preliminary hearing Tuesday.

Police found in Huston's vehicle several cell phones and executed a warrant on his home in Grand Blanc, where they seized a laptop computer.

Huston's home was next to an elementary school, according to police reports.

Huston served six years in prison for aggravated stalking from January 1994 to September 2000, according to Michigan Department of Corrections

<http://www.salinereporter.com/cgi-bin/printme.pl>

2/14/2008

records.

Bunten said the incident was a cautionary tale to parents.

"I cannot stress enough that parents need to take an active role in their kids' computer use," Bunten said, "Predators hang around these (Internet social networking sites) just waiting for unexpected kids."

Staff Writer Brian Cox can be reached at 429-7380 or bcox@heritage.com.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.salinereporter.com/stories/021408/loc_20080214004.shtml

Grand Blanc school officials notifies parents of arrest of suspected sex offender

by Sally York | The Flint Journal

Wednesday February 13, 2008, 6:44 PM

GRAND BLANC -- Letters have been mailed to parents of students at Indian Hill Elementary to notify them that an accused sex offender lives next door to the school.

Michael B. Huston, 44, was arrested Friday in connection with sexually explicit text messages and emails police say he sent to a 15-year-old boy for months before trying to meet him at his high school in Washtenaw County. Huston lives in a house adjacent to the Indian Hill Elementary property. Letters sent by Grand Blanc School District officials Wednesday apprised parents that Huston was arraigned Sunday on one count of soliciting a minor for immoral purposes, a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison. According to a report by The Ann Arbor News, Huston was placed on \$100,000 bond pending a preliminary hearing Feb. 19.

The letter to parents stated: "Although the case has no relationship to Grand Blanc Schools, we wanted you to be aware of the situation... . Your child's safety is our number one goal."

Huston's name does not appear on either the Michigan or national sex offender registry.

Parents of students at Indian Hill expressed concern, but some said they were reassured by the range of security measures employed by the school. Lisa Hawtin, parent of a child who attends Indian Hill, said she has confidence in Principal Sarah Stone.

"I believe Mrs. Stone will have those kids under lock and key," Hawtin, of Burton, said. "She will make sure they're safe."

Still, Hawtin is worried.

"(Huston) lives so close," she said. "What if he's right there watching our babies?"

Patrick L. Chatterton, a Flint Township attorney whose twin boys go to Indian Hill, said he is concerned, "but we're all innocent until proven otherwise."

He added: "The precautions the school takes on a daily basis to ensure safety are adequate."

During school hours visitors can enter through only one door, and must be buzzed in by a secretary who can see visitors from her desk. The halls are closely monitored and other safeguards are in place, Chatterton said.

"It's like getting into Ft. Knox," he said.

"I trust the district, but it kind of does concern me," said Lynn Craighead, whose daughter attends Indian Hill. "The only thing is, I'd like to see some more help on the playground when they have recess."

Weather permitting, recess is held outdoors in an area that is not enclosed. Police said Huston and the teenage boy corresponded for months, but when it appeared Huston planned to meet the boy, it scared the boy enough to tell officials at his school.

Officers arrested Huston after observing his car near Saline High School in Pittsfield Township late Friday afternoon, The Ann Arbor News reported. A public defender has been assigned to Huston's case.

OAKLAND AUTHOR'S THERAPEUTIC MEMOIR

Abused son of killer turns secret pain into open book

February 12, 2008

BY L.L. BRASIER

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Chip St. Clair spent most of his young life looking for answers.

Why did his parents often snatch him up in the middle of the night and move? Why did his father frequently threaten him and beat his mother?

Advertisement

And when he learned at age 23 that the man he knew as his father, David St. Clair, was in truth Michael Grant, a child killer and escaped convict, he had even more questions.

Had he been snatched from some other family early on, as Grant had sometimes implied? And if so, who was he and where did he come from?

Today, St. Clair, now 32, has some answers, plus a job advocating for abused children and a new book in stores this month, "The Butterfly Garden: Surviving Childhood on the Run With One of America's Most Wanted."

"It was a long journey, and in the beginning I didn't know where my life was headed," St. Clair, who lives in Oakland County, said in an interview this month. "But what I learned is really remarkable, that when you dig deep inside yourself to try to find what you're made of, you can take a lot of pain and turn it into something positive."

"The Butterfly Garden" (HCI Publishing, \$15.95) is St. Clair's story of triumph, of his life with Grant and Leslie Carole, and the abuse he suffered at Grant's hands. St. Clair lived in fear of his ferocious father, who once dangled him from the balcony of a high-rise apartment.

In his book, St. Clair recounts how as a young boy, he escaped the misery by losing himself in books and fantasizing that some day he could be free of his parents. His freedom came in 1998, after Grant beat him, dislocating his right shoulder. The police were called and Grant was arrested.

His fingerprints matched those of a convict who had escaped from an Indiana prison in 1973 while serving time for the 1970 beating death of a toddler.

"When you deal with an abusive setting like I did, you almost become so complacent and so paralyzed with fear that you don't end up making the decisions that would help you get out of that environment," St. Clair said of why he remained with Grant into adulthood.

Grant was sent back to prison in 1998, and St. Clair began an earnest search for his identity, wondering if perhaps he was not Grant's son. Following a 2002 report in the Free Press, his story went national, and he was soon on the TV news programs "Dateline" and "Good Morning America."

Justice for Children, a Houston-based nonprofit agency, hired him as a regional director.

Finally, in 2004, St. Clair obtained DNA from Grant, who was still in an Indiana prison. Grant, he learned with mixed emotions, was his biological father.

"Nobody would want to know for a fact that your father is a child killer," St. Clair said. "On the other hand, I was just happy that there wasn't a family out there who had been missing a child."

Grant was released in 2007, but has not had contact with his son. St. Clair remains estranged from his mother.

St. Clair said his book is one more step in healing.

"I'm very happy today," he said. "I'm content with where my life is headed. I feel a peace and contentment with my wife, Lisa, and want everybody to know that anybody can have hope for the future."

Contact **L.L. BRASIER** at 248-858-2262 or brasier@freepress.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080212/NEWS03/802120314>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



ourMidland.com
from the Midland Daily News

02/13/2008

Mentors needed for foster care program

By [Tony Lascari](#)

A new program is offering people the chance to help children and young adults in foster care in Midland and Isabella counties.

Holly Ball, mentor coordinator with Isabella and Midland County Department of Human Services, is working to recruit mentors for youth between 14 and 23 years old.

"We have youth waiting to be matched that are extremely excited and ready for their mentor," she said.

In order to be eligible for the program, the youth must have abuse or neglect in his or her background.

To mentor, people must attend training provided through AmeriCorps and the Department of Human Services, as well as be able to commit to a one-year relationship with a mentee, meeting at least 10 hours a month.

The majority of foster care clients available for a match are high school aged and are coming upon, making or already in the transition period into adulthood beyond high school, Ball said.

"This transition is extremely difficult for the youth as they do not have the support that comes from a stable family, thus the need for a mentor," she said. "Mentors will help the youth in terms of goal setting, good decision-making and life skills that are necessary to leading a successful life."

Ball said the youth involved in the program are amazing.

"I'm very passionate about this program and its development; there is no doubt once people meet these youth, they will be as well," she said.

To get involved, contact Ball at (989) 772-8407 in Isabella County or (989) 835-7098 in Midland County. Ball also can be reached by e-mailing her at BallH@michigan.gov.

Mentors must pass a criminal background check done through DHS.

Advertisement



©Midland Daily News 2008

Op-Ed Column
Feb. 13, 2008

February is Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month in Michigan

Duane Michael Wilson, LMSW
Michigan Department of Human Services

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has proclaimed February as being Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month in Michigan to heighten public awareness that involved fathers matter when it comes to improving child outcomes.

Research is telling us is that when children have both mother and father positively involved in their lives, outcomes improve and children become more successful. It only makes sense that this is the case when we look back at how the different genders parent and the balance that two parents provide a child.

Have you ever witnessed a man gently tossing his child in the air? What do you think the typical mother's response is to the act? Over the years that I have spoken on the topic of fatherhood, I've asked these questions and can tell you that most people have witnessed such an interaction between a father and his child. The typical female response is to gasp or cringe at the sight of the event. I love this scenario because it demonstrates the different approaches men and women bring to parenting. Men and women truly do parent differently and that's a good thing.

As I have talked about the different style of male and female parenting, I often say that males parent using a risk-taking mode, while females parent using a protection mode. The father who playfully tosses his child is teaching his child risk-taking. The mother who cringes in response is teaching self protection. A father is more apt to allow his two-year-old toddler to work at turning a door handle while the mother is more apt to assist and open the door for the child. Both parenting styles are important in health child development. We all know that too much risk taking is as problematic as is too much protection.

There is an overwhelming amount of research that supports the fact that the further we get from the two parent model of child rearing, the worse our children are doing. There are many reasons why more men than women are not

positively involved with their children. One major reason has to do with the fact that society seems to generally view mothers as the more important parent, which leads to men and women not having the same standing.

Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month encourages us to recognize the importance of responsible fatherhood, as nurturing fathers strengthen Michigan families. Support and promote male parent involvement and in doing

so you are supporting children with the parenting they need and deserve to thrive.

###

Make room for dad, even in odd cases

Posted by [pwelleve](#) February 14, 2008 10:13AM

The following is the [Jackson Citizen Patriot's](#) editorial for February 14:

Here's a situation with no winning outcome: A child is born to a married woman and a man who's not her husband. It's a bad enough circumstance without the state making it worse.

A recent story in this newspaper highlighted the problem: Fathers in these cases have no legal rights to visit or have custody of these children. There's an effort to change this in Lansing, one that lawmakers should support. It's time to rewrite the law for a new era.

The paternity law appears to be a throwback to when claims to fatherhood were nearly impossible to resolve. For simplicity's sake — and perhaps because such cases were rare — legal rights to the child went to the married man, whether he's the dad or not.

Now, DNA testing settles the question. There should be no arguing who fathered a child. Shutting a man out of his offspring's life seems abundantly unfair.

No one really wins here. A child fathered to someone other than the mother's husband is bound to struggle with issues of identity. There's also the difficulty of arranging visitation and custody, and the prospect for siblings to be broken apart if they have different fathers.

Still, only a Pollyanna can pretend the nuclear family as we once knew it fits everyone. Children grow up with a single mom, divorced parents, step siblings, half brothers and sisters, grandparents or in other living arrangements. Throwing the biological father into the mix — even if the mother is married to someone else — shouldn't be rejected.

It would be better for families to work out cases like these on their own. But if they can't, the law should make room for (the unmarried) daddy.

[Print Page](#)

Jury convicts Aranda of domestic violence

Wednesday, February 13, 2008 11:31 AM EST

CASSOPOLIS - A Dowagiac man learned on Tuesday that you can't push, shove and grab to get your way in Cass County.

A five-man, one-woman Cass County jury deliberated for approximately a half hour before unanimously convicting 39-year-old Pedro Aranda Jr. of E. Railroad Street of domestic violence for repeatedly assaulting his ex-girlfriend, Michelle Elrod.

Testimony from the victim, Elrod, was that on Monday, Dec. 17, 2007, Aranda showed up at Harding's Market in Dowagiac while she was grocery shopping.

Upon exiting the store, the defendant followed the victim to her van and forced his way into the passenger seat.

Once in the van, Aranda aggressively tried to take her cell phone despite her protestations.

He began to grab and pull on her clothing in an attempt to get the phone.

As Elrod was yelling for help and sounding the horn on her van, the defendant grabbed her chest and pulled her towards him.

Elrod bit him to get him away. Aranda then yanked his ex-girlfriend's keys out of the ignition and left with her keys.

Two witnesses on scene testified that they heard the female victim's screams for help and heard the car horn sounding.

Both identified Aranda as fleeing the van and the vicinity.

Diab Rizk tried the case for the people.

Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz advised, "You can't bully your way through life. We live by laws, not threats and intimidation."

Fitz also noted that prompt action by the Dowagiac Police department helped bring another domestic violence offender to justice.

Sentencing is set for Feb. 29 in front of District Judge Paul Deats, who presided over the trial.

Domestic violence is punishable by 93 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine, according to the Prosecutor's Office.

Woman's throat slit, man arrested

by Sally York | The Flint Journal

Thursday February 14, 2008, 8:46 AM

RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP -- A man has been arrested after a domestic dispute in which a woman's throat was slit.

Police said the man, 27, called 911 Wednesday afternoon to report an attempted suicide.

But when police arrived at the Clark Road home, they determined the woman had been attacked.

The woman, 26, is expected to survive, police said.

The man is lodged in the [Genesee County Jail](#). No charges have been filed as the investigation continues, police said.

Two children, ages 1 and 2, were in the home at the time of the incident.

They are staying with family members, police said.



Stitching with love: Quilters create sleeping bags for the homeless

BY VANESSA McCRAY

vmccray@record-eagle.com

TRAVERSE CITY -- Women hover over a colorful quilt, with each stitch offering a promise of a warmer night for someone they've never met.

A group which calls itself "Our Brother's Keeper" has created a couple thousand sleeping bags like the red and green covering stretched out on a table in a room at Traverse City's Immanuel Baptist Church. The local project formed in 1995, part of a national effort to provide sleeping bags for homeless people living out in the cold.

"We make about two a week, sometimes more, depending on how much they talk," said Dorothy Fistler of Traverse City.

Members are mostly women of retirement age. During a recent sewing bee, 10 ladies were at work.

They meet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursdays, chatting about diets, religion and politics as they sew up the cozy bags from scratch. Over the years, volunteers have come and gone. Fistler never imagined the project would continue so long and successfully.

She was inspired to start the program here after reading about it in a magazine. Fistler recalled a time as a young girl when she and her father went out to the porch of the family's Detroit home to get the newspaper. They discovered an imprint in the snow where someone had been huddled down for a night's sleep. It moved both of them. Fistler never forgot it.

Years later, after turning 60, and with her children gone and grandchildren grown, she wondered what to do with the rest of her life. She came across the magazine article describing the sleeping bag project and decided to launch a local effort.

All of the material to make the sleeping bags is donated. Area thrift stores set aside blankets, large swatches of fabric and sheets, and the group collects neckties to bind the bags.

Whispering Needles of Kingsley gives batting to fill them.

"We didn't want to just throw them in a landfill," said Susan Ewing, owner of the company that does sewing for interior decorators and bedding for a yacht business.

A Bible verse is stitched in the corner of each handmade covering. The women try to create attractive as well as practical bags from the scraps and cast-off material they recycle.

"We like them to have a little more personality," said Rosemary Henriksen of Traverse City. "Even though it is purely for warmth, we want to have something that shows we care about them..., so, we don't put orange with red."

Completed bags sometimes are sent to camps or downstate shelters, but most go to area organizations such as the Goodwill Inn or Women's Resource Center.

The bags provide comfort for the quilters, too. When Fistler was diagnosed with cancer years ago, she still attended the sewing sessions. She would curl up in one of the sleeping bags and find companionship and encouragement from her friends. Now recovered, she's back to sewing with the group.

Another regular, Buelalee Gumper of Traverse City, said group members helped her after the recent deaths of her husband and mother, who threaded needles for the sleeping bag crew. Gumper pulled yellow yarn through a quilt, around which the other women worked.

"It's a real pleasure," she said.

The women welcome new members and regularly share moments in prayer. They're bound by threads that create hope for those in deepest need.

"Absolutely, I didn't think it would last this long, but then we would get a letter or something, and it would encourage me again," said Fistler.

Copyright © 1999-2006 cnhi, inc.

Photos



Ten volunteers work with fervor to make a sleeping bag in the basement of Immanuel Baptist Church. The women are part of Our Brother-s Keeper, making sleeping bags for the homeless. Record-Eagle



Our Brother's Keeper members hand-craft a sleeping bag for eventual donation to the homeless. Record-Eagle

News

> [News Digest](#) > [News](#)

Print this Page

[«--back to story](#)

Walk for Warmth help

POSTED: February 14, 2008

Article Photos



Community Action Agency (CAA) Executive Director Bill Dubord, center, accepts a donation for \$1,000 from Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 24 commander Terrence Reveal, left, and senior vice commander Harold Brazeau. The money, donated from the DAV membership, will be used for the CAA's Walk for Warmth program, providing heating assistance for local families. (Daily Press photo by Nicole Gearhart)

[Subscribe to Daily Press](#)



NE Michigan again has highest annual unemployment in state...

[Print Page](#)

by Holly Nelson

OSCODA - Unemployment in Northeast Lower Michigan jumped to 10.8 percent for December, reported the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, helping the region earn the dubious distinction of the worst annual average unemployment for 2007.

“Michigan’s local labor markets displayed typical seasonal changes in December,” said Rick Wacławek, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. “During 2007, preliminary annual averages show that most Michigan regions recorded labor force and employment reductions and slight jobless rate increases.”

With the December numbers in, the DLEG was able to calculate the annual unemployment, with the statewide average increasing to 7.2 percent unemployment for 2007, up from 6.9 the year before.

The Ann Arbor area boasted the lowest annual average among the state’s 17 labor markets with 4.8 percent, a slight increase from its 2006 rate of 4.6.

The northeast market - which consists of the counties of Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Roscommon - was at the very bottom for the second year in a row, with an annual rate of 9.6 percent, up from 9.0 percent for 2006.

Statewide, DLEG statisticians report, since December 2006, total employment declined in 16 of the 17 labor markets, with significant drops in a number of areas. Labor force levels fell during the same period in 16 regions with an average decline of 1.5 percent.

From December 2006 to December 2007, seasonally unadjusted payroll jobs fell statewide by 79,000 or 1.8 percent. Of the 14 major metropolitan areas in the state, 11 reported job declines over the year while three displayed gains.

Over the year, manufacturing, construction, retail trade and government employment were down in most metropolitan areas, while jobs in health services were up in nearly all regions.

Helping keep the Ann Arbor area at the top and the northeast region at the bottom were December jobless numbers, which increased in most labor markets, according to the DLEG.

Washtenaw County boasted the lowest December rate, at 4.7 percent, while Mackinac County had the highest at 18.4 percent.

The northeast region experienced a 10.8 percent jobless rate for December, with 10,700 people out of work, compared to 10.2 and 10,200 for the same period in 2006, for a 4.9 percent increase. At the same time, the civilian labor force again dropped, with 700 fewer workers from the month before and 1,200 less than a year before. The labor force now stands at 98,500.

Iosco County showed slightly better than the regional average for December, but was still in the double digits at 10.6 percent. On a scale of 83 counties, this put Iosco at 71. In November, Iosco’s unemployment rate was at 9.6 percent, an increase of one percent.

Crawford County had the best December numbers for the region at 8.5 percent unemployment, ranking it 47th. Ogemaw was number 56 with 9.0 percent; Alpena was 54th at 9.0 percent; Otsego was 66th at 10 percent; Roscommon 69th, 10.5 percent; Alcona 72nd with 11 percent unemployment; Oscoda County 76th, 11.6 percent; Cheboygan 79th,

13.3 percent; Montmorency 81st, 14.5 percent, and Presque Isle was 82nd with 15.1 percent of its citizens out of work.

Copyright © 2008 Oscoda Press
P.O. Box 663, Oscoda, MI 48750